

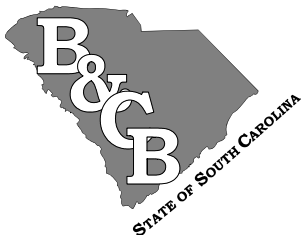
# FITNESS

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## Children and the Need for Physical Activity: Fact Sheet

1. Children in the U.S. today are less fit than they were a generation ago and showing early signs of cardiovascular disease such as weight gain, higher serum cholesterol, and cigarette smoking.
2. Inactive children, when compared with active children, weigh more, have higher blood pressure and lower levels of heart-protective high-density lipoproteins.
3. Even though heart attack and stroke are rare in children, evidence suggests that the process leading to those conditions begins in childhood.
4. Among children and adolescents ages 4-19, the mean total blood cholesterol level is 165 mg/dL. For boys it is 163 mg/dL and for girls it is 167 mg/dL.
5. Fifteen million American children under age 18 are exposed to second-hand smoke in the home. It is estimated that 3,000 American young people become smokers every day.
6. Inactive children are more likely to become inactive adults.
7. Healthful lifestyle training should begin in childhood to promote improved cardiovascular health in adult life. The following good health practices should be promoted among children:
  - Regular physical activity
  - A low-fat, low-cholesterol diet after the age of two
  - Smoking prevention
  - Appropriate weight for height
  - Regular pediatric medical checkups

Source: American Heart Association



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